

## Oral History Cover Sheet

**Name:** Jim Tisdale

**Date of Interview:** February 22, 2010

**Location of Interview:** Tisdale's residence in Starkville, MS

**Interviewer:** Denny Holland

**Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service:** Over 30 years.

**Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held:** Assistant manager at Cross Creeks NWR, assistant manager at Tennessee Refuge, project leader at Holla Bend, Eufaula NWR, then went to Atlanta office, Salt Lake area office, and manager of Noxubee until retirement.

**Most Important Projects:** He and Carol Run made the first big walk in duck trap in the country, working on BLHP.

**Colleagues and Mentors:** Burton Webster (says was his hero), Carol Run, Don Brooks, Vandiver Childs.

**Most Important Issues:** Being on duty 7 days a week at Cross Creeks, dealing with poachers, getting supplies for what his refuge needed, would get a lot of stuff through military surplus.

**Brief Summary of Interview:** Was born in Jackson, Mississippi and graduated high school in 1956. After high school he went to Mississippi State and went to Forestry School. After getting married, Mr. Tisdale took a job with the Forest Service out in California but was able to transfer to the Fish and Wildlife Service to Cross Creeks National Wildlife Refuge. Mr. Tisdale talks about his time at Cross Creeks and the other various stations that he worked at throughout his career. He and his wife Jacque had three children, two boys and one girl, and they both share professional and personal stories that occurred throughout Mr. Tisdale's career.

**Denny:** Today is February the 22, the year 2010 at 8:30 am. And we're in the home of Jimmy and Jacque Tisdale at 2300 Twin Gum Road, Starkville, Mississippi 39759.

Jimmy, would you please give us a run down of where you were born, give us a little background on your life starting with your home in Jackson, Mississippi was it?

**Jim:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. We; born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi and graduated high school in 1956 and immediately came to Mississippi State and was entered; went into Forestry School, didn't have a Wildlife School at the time so I went into Forestry School. And got a Forestry degree in 1961 and by that time they put in a Master's Degree program in Wildlife Management so I stayed around and got a degree in Wildlife Management. And wouldn't you know it that when I graduated, I always had a desire. At Mississippi State I had spent a lot of time out on Noxubee Refuge as a student and hunting and fishing and observing and the old manager, Burton Webster, was my hero; he kinda took me around and so I had wanted to work for refuges and when I got out and contacted Fish and Wildlife Service, they said "Oops, sorry we got a hiring freeze, we can't hire anybody right now." So I said "Dag gum-it." So, well anyway. Anyway, I went to work with the Forest Service and went to northern California, Weaverville. And I was not cut out to be a forester, I'll tell you so. About, let's see, I started out there in probably June of 1963 and oh I did, Jacque and I were married when I got the last two years in that master's degree program, we were married, we had married the summer before I started that. But anyway, we headed out to northern California and, and I about Christmas time, early December anyway, I was getting a little bit homesick by then and this and so I happened to write Rick; Larry Gibbons, who I had known. And I wrote him a letter and I said, "Look, I'm with the Forest Service out here and I still would want to work for Fish and Wildlife Service." And I never will forget, it was probably the best Christmas present I ever had, I got; it was before telephones were used widely, and got a telegram. And I was sitting in there in the office of the Forest Service and got a telegram and it said, you know how it goes, "Stop", it said, "Dear Jimmy, Stop. Still can't hire. Stop. But can transfer. Would you accept a GS-7 position at Cross Creek Refuge in Tennessee?" And I headed home to tell Jacque we were going to the south, so (unintelligible). And we did, we went on out and—and then I wound up at Dover,

Tennessee and this was, if you remember Carol Run, of course, was the manager out there. And Cross Creeks was a brand new refuge; this was a really a valuable experience. Cross Creeks was a brand new refuge on the Cumberland River and at that time the land between the lakes, the TVA, land between the lakes was just a cod (unintelligible) and they were starting to put it in and Cross Creeks was put in to take the place of Kentucky Woodlands. And Denny, your father...

**Denny:** Yeah.

**Jim:** ... used to be a manager at Kentucky Woodlands. Anyway, we made numerous trips up there moving equipment and all from Kentucky Woodlands down to Cross Creeks but that was a valuable time for a young assistant manager because you did everything. We were building roads and building dikes and that sort of thing but it was, it was a pretty neat time. But, let me go back just a minute. Carol Run, as you know, is a character. And he got word that this young man was coming from California and Carol had built up the local populace around there to, he said "I don't know." Said "This guy coming from California. I don't know what we're going to get." Said, "You know these folks." Said, "He's coming by himself." Said "I don't know if he's married or not." You know and he was building this stuff up. And when I, when we graduated from college, we bought our first, not a new car, but this was a Rambler, if you remember at that time. And...

**Jacque:** Nash Rambler

**Jim:** And it was, I thought it was light red but I guess it was pink. But anyway.

**Jacque:** It was two-toned pink.

**Jim:** Two-toned pink and anyway as we, Carol had built up the local group and here comes this single guy, I left Jacque till we could find housing, I left Jacque and the kids in Jackson with parents. And here comes this single guy driving into Dover, Tennessee in

a pink Rambler and (laughing) we had a little while living that down but that was neat deal. And we had to live, we were talking the other, we had to live in a, we had an old house that was a, actually it was the used car, there was a car dealership across the road and all the used cars was in this and they did say they would rent this to us. It was, it was, what was Dover, 800?

**Jacque:** Yeah.

**Jim:** Jacque. About 800 population.

**Denny:** Dover, Tennessee.

**Jim:** Yeah, Dover, Tennessee. And they were building houses out on the refuge; they weren't ready so we moved into the house with all the used cars out in the front yard. And had two small kids at the time.

**Jacque:** Babies.

**Jim:** And so it was and we stayed there, let's see, as you know when they're building those houses the government has a punch list and all this and it just seemed like they never would—and we moved in, in what January, and stayed there until about May or June, I guess; it wasn't that long and they finished the houses out on the refuge but we were getting so disgusted with this house, they finished the houses but as with government planning they still didn't have the water or the well done and, but we decided we'd move out anyway and we hauled water for, until they got, what a month, two months, but a pretty neat time. I remember the kids and I would go down to the water control structures down below the house down there and I'd take a screw driver and we'd go in under and took a screwdriver and pop it in between the stop logs and jack it up just a little bit to get a stream of water...

**Denny:** Spray of water.

**Jim:** ...and we'd get our soap and we would and we would have a shower. Now Miss Jacque never would do that (laughing) but we did and, and; but the house was brand new and that was the best house we'd ever live in so we were tickled to death.

**Denny:** Carol had told me that you were coming but he said, "I think he's a hippy." So (laughing).

**Jacque:** That was the real, that was really what he told me (unintelligible, some speaking at same time.)

**Jim:** Well, Carol was, was with all of the, he was a character, with all of these other maintenance folks he hired, local folks, they said he'd make you stand up and recite the Pledge to the Flag while in full salute, at least he didn't make us do that.

**Kathy:** Tell, tell a little bit more about that house you lived in with the cars in the front yard. Your neighbors (unintelligible, speaking at same time).

**Denny:** (Speaking at same time) Your rental house there in town.

**Jacque:** Well, we, when we went there, we had one son that was 3 months old and the other one was about 16, 17 months, babies, and this house; it was (unintelligible) and had been abandoned, an older home they hadn't torn it down and as Jim said, they used the front yard for, for parking the used cars. But what he didn't mention was they also had flood lights on those cars at night and we were, had one big room that we could heat in the front and that's what we had our bed and both the baby beds and all our clothes in that front room. And then, so at night we just had this perpetual rosy glow coming through the shades. I don't know how the children slept but I guess they did. And that's the only room we kept warm because you couldn't heat the whole house and that was, as typical of some of those old homes, a big wide entrance hall. And off of it in the back was the bathroom, so to go to the bathroom you go out into this really cold hall and run

around to the otherwise-abandoned bathroom; it was very, very cold and you made quick haste. And the walls were, the walls had holes in them and the 18-month old learned, as you know, he was almost; he was toddling, he was walking, very good walking. And he would go and put his hand in these holes and bring out pieces of stuff, sheetrock pieces, and I'd go "Oh, this is just not good for our children." And, but anyway, there was no closet. We had nails in the studs around the room, you find a stud and put a big long nail in it; clothes were hung up there. The baby clothes were stacked in chairs or on the floor and one time, you know, we just moved in there and this was a town of about between five and eight hundred, I'm not sure exactly but small town event for somebody to come in. And the ladies from the local church came to visit the sweet little girl that had moved in there. And they came to the door and I was just aghast that, you know, they were going to come and see what we were living in, thinking we were just trash or something. But they came in and they daintily sat on the edge of the bed, 'cuz that's where they could sit. And I did the best about entertaining them but they were very gracious but I was *so embarrassed* but we kept living there until they did the houses and Jim said they didn't have the water; well, the problem is when they got water it was sulphur water and we couldn't use it. So they had to order some high-priced...

**Jim:** Filtration.

**Jacque:** ...filtration system but one of the reasons I wanted to leave that house, not only because it was an embarrassment and awful but when you look out the window on the side, which was close to the old house next door; I guess the houses had not been plumbed back in that time and they didn't have plumbing in them but they had plumbed it themselves. In the kitchen they had made a hole in the wall and stuck a PVC pipe out from the sink and so when they got through washing dishes they would just put it in the sink; I think they washed them in a dishpan and put them in a sink and the water would just come out that PVC pipe and you could hear it go "Splat, splat, splat." And you knew that's dirty water coming out the wall, you know, out there, and I never asked about what their bathroom facilities was, I didn't really want to (laughing); I didn't really want to go on that side of the house but we were so tickled to get that, you know, job and; we say

we, for Jim to get that job and to be there that it was, it was a, it was okay. Looking back, it was quite fun.

**Jim:** That...

**Denny:** You survived it.

**Jacque:** I survived it.

**Jim:** That house was a typical government just a, you know, a three bedroom house from the 1500 square feet or 1600 but it was a mansion to us after that (laughing) ordeal that we had lived in.

**Jacque:** The only problem was it was that white brick and everybody's seen those white brick standard houses; they had some impoundments down, it was on a hill; this office was on a hill, there was impoundments down below and it looked quite nice. Well, whoever in their wonderful judgment decided that the houses should look out on that. So they turned the house, the front of the house was towards the impoundment, the back of the house was to the, you drove up to the road. And the only way you could get in the back of the house is go through the furnace room or the kitchen.

**Jim:** Kitchen.

**Jacque:** And, you know, the front of the house was lovely and if you got down in the bottom and looked back up it was a beautiful; nobody ever went, the public...

**Jim:** To the front.

**Jacque:** ...friends didn't go down there, they'd drive up and think "Oh my goodness, this is interesting, isn't it." Come in and it looked like that furnace room was the front door. So people would come up and you got to the door and on the right was this second

hand washer and dryer that we bought. (Unintelligible) I was so glad at first, you know, I had diapers. This was...

**Jim:** Yep.

**Jacque:** ...before, you know, disposable diapers. And we'd, Polly and I both, who lived right next door, would hang our diapers out on the line and they would freeze before they dried but so when we got that secondhand dryer, I was tickled to death. But people would come in that door and that's all they could see was the washer and dryer and the oil furnace.

**Denny:** And the pink Nash Rambler.

**Jacque:** And the pink Nash Rambler. That Nash Rambler was a good car. It had, if you can remember, it had the push button gears.

**Jim:** Transmission.

**Denny:** Yeah.

**Jacque:** You didn't; you pushed a button for reverse and forward and D1 and D2, it was just a little push button; it was, it was a nice car. It was better than that '50 whatever it was Chevy that we had.

**Kathy:** It was just ...

**Denny:** So you, you upgraded in your housing and how long did y'all stay at, at Cross Creeks with, with **Carol**?



**Jim:** A little over two years, a little over two years. And we moved from there to Paris, Tennessee, probably one of the shortest moves in the history with the Fish and Wildlife Service, it was 35 miles and.

**Jacque:** But while we were at Cross Creeks, I heard Jim say a while ago that it was a new refuge. Carol Run believed in if you worked for the federal government and you worked for Fish and Wildlife Service you worked every day.

**Jim:** Every day round, basically around the clock if you could hold up.

**Jacque:** Put on his uniform and he'd expected his assistant manager to have his uniform on seven days out of the year, he did not, he didn't mind us going to church on Sunday morning but on Sunday afternoon, put the uniform on and patrol. And I deeply resented that because here I am 25 years old or something and, with two babies and Jim's, as much as we appreciated the job, I wanted him at home some. He didn't question it; that was what Carol wanted; Carol did it, Carol did it till all hours and then worked till ten and eleven o'clock at night and that was just part of it.

**Jacque:** ...organized. She was overly organized, it's the only way you can say it is things were and there's still a lot of people like that today, present company included, of course. But, but it was part of the job to work day in and day out.

**Jim:** It was and we, we stayed there, like I said, two years and it was very valuable 'cuz I drove bulldozers and ran backhoes and did everything; I was part of the work crew.

**Denny:** Yeah.

**Jim:** I really was, and you know, I never liked to write reports but it was almost a relief if, if Carol said we needed to do something, you'd know to stay in the office and get rested up a little. But while we were there, and we talked about this the other night, Denny, I did get to go, this was in, I guess 1965, the first Refuge Manager Training

Academy at Arden Hills, Minnesota, and I got to be a part of that. And went up for five weeks or maybe into six weeks and oh what was his name, Dr. Green.

**Denny:** Bill Green.

**Jim:** Yeah, Bill Green headed that up and but yeah, you know, it was, it was; that group was kind of a “who’s who” of Fish and Wildlife Service managers that went on through the years and you made friends that we still meet them at this reunion that we have but Gritman was there and most all the managers, that went on to be primary managers in the Fish and Wildlife Service was there. I think there was probably...

**Denny:** Dave Olson was part of that too, wasn’t he?

**Jim:** Dave Olson was there and—Ty Berry...

**Denny:** Yeah.

**Jim:** ...was there. In fact we were, we were roommates when we got there. They, they had filled up and there was five of us that was; Ed Moses, Ty Berry, myself, I cannot remember the other two. But anyway, they roomed; they put us out at the local motel. And, you know, we thought this was terrible but after awhile we thought we were very fortunate ‘cuz we could go sit in a coffee shop and study and do all this and we had a sauna and all that sort of thing that you have at a motel that they didn’t have. But anyway, we stayed there for five weeks and came back all trained up and ready to be refuge managers and so.

**Jacque:** Well, I’ll have to make one more addendum to your statement that you drove all these heavy-duty equipments; the staff, the maintenance people laughed and said he stuck every thing on the refuge; you got to remember he was raised in downtown Jackson, Mississippi and didn’t have, you know, well a lot. And we went to Mississippi State and that was it; he had never any equipment other than the lawnmower and the hoe that his

dad made him use in the garden. But they said he stuck everything there at least once, some more than once, he would get it stuck, walk up to the maintenance shed and they'd laugh and go down and get him out but.

[Jim or Denny saying something in background]

**Jacque:** That was part of the learning curve also, I guess.

**Denny:** It was a learning experience, developing any refuge or any facility on a refuge is truly a learning experience, it's part of your career.

**Jim:** And that one was pretty neat in that we had worked basically for two years building roads, building levies and putting in water control structures for the impoundments and all and then right before we left was the first year they flooded...

**Denny:** For Lake Barkley.

**Jim:** We sat there and watched the water come up and, and it was pretty neat; filled up our impoundments and all the work we'd done. And we got; I think they flooded that maybe in the fall of '65 and the next summer is when we moved across the river to Paris, Tennessee and Tennessee Refuge.

**Jacque:** The (unintelligible) of Dover was so supportive, you know it was just a handful of employees but that was a good economic development tool and they really; it had been, you know, the two professional stuff and then they hired locals and so the guys there and so that. We'd, you know, went in to do our little bit of shopping you could do there; you had to really drive a ways to get to a decent grocery store and things like that but went to a local church and everybody was just thrilled to have the refuge, it was great.

**Jim:** But the, we; that area was, was a really heavy history of home brew, of course, the stills and we were...

**Jacque:** Go ahead and call it what it is.

**Jim:** Moonshine.

**Jacque:** Moonshine.

**Jim:** But you know, we were, it was kind of funny to me in that we were putting the; part of the duties right in that first year was doing the refuge boundaries so we were, they had it marked out and we were coming along putting the signs up. And you'd go over and down into a hollow, every hollow that you ever went in, which had a little stream coming through it, had the remains of a still in it. I bet you we counted twenty or thirty at least, every one had the remains of a still in it. And Jacque said the community was very supportive and they were but you'd go in; we'd be out posting a boundary way on off and go into a little country store out there for lunch and it was like all this conversation going on and we'd walk in and it'd be dead silence so they did not trust government men totally.

**Jacque:** That was the uniform that went in; they questioned that but I think the townspeople who just saw us as people but those old guys out in the backside of nowhere saw a government uniform and that was serious. Just don't tell them anything.

[Jim or Denny saying something]

**Jacque:** Don't tell them anything.

**Jim:** But the one accomplishment, if you remember, it got to be passé but Carol Run and I think we might of built the first big walk-in duck trap in the country and I never will forget that we built this thing and then as I said, the water was coming up and it flooded and we had it baited and he said "Jim, you better go down and check that duck trap." And I went down there and it was wall-to-wall ducks in that thing, I never

(unintelligible). I got so excited and we came down with a full crew and I think we banded three or four hundred birds out of that one deal and I was; that was quite a deal, I don't know how many ducks. In fact the banding laboratory finally shut us off, said, "Ya'll banded enough ducks, we don't need any more from that one area." So.

**Denny:** (Unintelligible) the population.

**Jim:** Yeah we were.

**Denny:** Statistics

**Jacque:** (Unintelligible) and all that.

**Denny:** Yeah.

**Jim:** Yeah.

**Jacque:** Yeah.

**Denny:** Let's talk a little bit about your tour of duty at Tennessee Refuge.

**Jim:** Again, a very, couldn't have been different in refuge managers where Carol Run was a hard charging but loose cannon and all this, and then Vandiver Childs...

**Jacque:** VL

**Jim:** ...which was a, VL Childs is what he went by, was a very, very good, very well-respected, but he was a very "no play" in VL and all that, but I still learned a lot and I stayed there two years also. And, but Tennessee Refuge at the time we would host over up to a million ducks every year and we had the big farming program; we actually had a soil conservationist on staff to manage the farming program and we did a lot of farming

and so I got a real exposure to farming and always fooling with the huge numbers of birds at Tennessee Refuge. But Tennessee Refuge, as you know, is three different units and so you were working at a different place every day and all and it was; and we lived in Paris, Tennessee and...

**Jacque:** And our little girl was born there, in Paris, and I was so glad to get over there. I remember because of, you know, the twenty-four hour, seven-day-a-week, uniform-wearing-working Carol Run. Mr. Childs, VL, said, "No, you didn't have to wear a uniform and come in, you know, Saturdays and Sundays." And so Jim took him at his word and we didn't and I was thrilled and it wasn't long into our stay, as I recall, one Monday morning, Mr. Childs called Jimmy and says, what, one of those units...

**Jim:** What was...

**Jacque:** ... "what was going on unit..." I don't remember the name, "...this weekend?" And Jim said "Well, I don't know." He said, "You didn't go check it?" "No sir, I didn't." He said "Why not?" "I didn't know I was supposed to." "Well, you're supposed to check them." And so we realized you may not have to put your uniform on and you may not have to go out all day but by jingo, the weekends were not free, you were still expected to check what was going on, on the refuge and he did from then on.

**Jim:** The, let's see, what was it, Big Sandy, Duck River and Busseltown.

**Denny:** Busseltown.

**Jim:** And they're strung out in mileage from all the way up and down the Kentucky Lake, Tennessee River and...

**Denny:** Mileage from...

**Jim:** Oh, down to the Bustle Town unit was about fifty miles.

**Denny:** Yeah.

**Jim:** So it was spread out. The Duck River unit was the big waterfowl unit, big bottom; it was a huge bottom and we'd grow corn and then the lake would come up and partially flood that and that's where you, we fed all those thousands of ducks but uh. I also got a real experience starting in with law enforcement, of course, as you realize, when I signed on at Cross Creeks, part of the first day they handed me a badge and a gun and no training whatsoever, just a badge and a gun. But at Cross Creeks there was very little law enforcement that we ever did but at Tennessee, it was a big problem so I got real introduction into law enforcement. And we had everything there from the normal poaching to, and I never will forget the first time I saw the dry land—lines that they put out. Have you ever seen that, Denny?

**Denny:** Uh-nuh.

**Jim:** And they did that; was a trotline, was a trotline for geese. And they put a trotline out across a cornfield or something; they never were on the refuge but they'd be right on the edge of it and they'd bait drop lines off of that with corn, and a goose would, with a hook in it, and that was a gruesome sight. When the geese would come in and eat the corn and hung just like a catfish would and they'd be out on dry land and we caught several of those, so a real introduction into law enforcement. And we stayed...

**Jacque:** Well on a personal note, while we were there, VL Childs' oldest son.

**Jim:** Killed in Vietnam.

**Jacque:** Was shot down as a fighter pilot.

**Jim:** That was Buster.

**Denny:** Buster.

**Jim:** Buster Childs.

**Jacque:** I think he was the third, maybe, VL Childs III, and he had a young son and it was...

**Jim:** Yeah, we went over when and...

**Jacque:** Personal tragedy.

**Jim:** Kept the children and all during the services and all of that and that little boy would look up and see a plane and say "Oh daddy." And it would just break your heart. And it was, and I don't think VL ever got over that and.

**Denny:** I talked to VL, you know a number of years later, and somehow or another the subject came up and yeah, no, he didn't.

**Jacque:** No, it was heart breaking; it still is. I, you know, I can't hardly; that child we were like babysitting and they had a, actually it was a picture of VL in his fighter, his pilot, and you know he had signed it and given it (unintelligible). And the little boy looked up and said "Vroom, vroom, daddy." And oh.

**Denny:** Early in the Vietnam War.

**Jacque:** In Vietnam, yeah. So that places it in where it was in history but a real tragedy.

**Jim:** So, so we stayed there two years almost and Jacque was; in fact, we had the job had been, job with our first project leader position in Holla Bend which we were, we needed to go there and clean up some mess that the former manager (Jacque laughing) was leaving so.



**Jacque:** The former manager Denny Holland.

**Denny:** Yeah, the former manager was me. I had to leave something for you to do.

**Jim:** But anyway, we had the job, had been told that's where we were going, but we had to wait until our daughter was born.

**Denny:** Yeah.

**Jim:** And so Tamarah was born was born there in Paris and then we moved when she was, what a month old about, moved to Russellville, Arkansas. And was first project leader at Holla Bend.

**Jacque:** And we lived in...

**Jim:** My first project leader...

**Jacque:** ...we lived in Russellville, Arkansas, but it was over in Dardanelle.

**Jim:** Yeah, well the refuge itself, of course, was on the Arkansas River out from Dardanelle, Arkansas about ten miles away.

**Jacque:** But the office was downtown in the...

**Jim:** Post office.

**Jacque:** ...post office building, federal building, I suppose.

**Jim:** And Denny, you'll remember, I had Jenevieve Brewer as the...

**Denny:** That was mistake number one that I made.

**Jim:** Oh boy, she was something. She would do these, she would do the budget and I learned early on that I'd have to check it with a fine tooth comb or you'd be over spent and they'd be raising cane with you, so. But, but Holla Bend, as you know, was a pretty nice refuge and Russellville was a really nice little town and all and we thoroughly enjoyed it. And again a big farming program so my experience at Tennessee came in really handy 'cuz we farmed at least 1500 acres, had cooperative farmers and all on the refuge. And some pretty good duck populations. And yeah, Jacque just reminded me of—I don't think I had been...

**Jacque:** A month or so.

**Jim:** ...I think I had been at Holla Bend for about a month and Don Brooks was the, in charge of the farming program there. Don Brooks was a veteran with the Fish and Wildlife Service and he had two little boys, young ones, and like I said, the refuge was out and the office was in town, in Russellville in the old post office building, and so a lot of times I would stay in there doing various paperwork. And I remember going out to the refuge one day and Don had been out since early that morning and you know, we kind missed, around noon, we kind of missed Don and said, "Where was, what was he doing?" And they said, "Well he was, he was mowing with that old tractor." And we missed him and couldn't find him and the tractor was parked right out back of the field office there out and, and I finally went out and looked at the tractor and just, I don't know what just; maybe I saw something I don't remember for sure but I looked down and Don was under the bush hog. He had somehow fallen off and of course he was, he was dead and that was quite the tragedy.

**Jacque:** It was awful.

**Denny:** It was.

**Jim:** He was, he was totally up under that bush hog and, and having to go tell the family and that was, that was rough. It really was. And, and (unintelligible). Only person, really the only serious injury; well, one more at the time, a lot later that we might talk about, the only time, the only injury of employees on a refuge that I was ever on.

**Jacque:** After that they put those mesh cage that's behind but at the time you were just sitting up on a seat. And they didn't do an autopsy for various reasons because it was an accidental death this way. But we had hoped that maybe he had had a heart attack or a heatstroke or something that caused him to fall. It was hot, hot weather but it was (unintelligible).

**Jim:** But we, they said that Don liked to stand up; he got, he, and drive a tractor and we, you know anything could have happened.

**Jacque:** You never know.

**Jim:** But it was a, it was a real tragedy but...

**Jacque:** And he's one of those at NCTC, on the wall of remembrance.

**Denny:** Yes, on the wall.

**Jim:** Well, we stayed; we stayed at Holla Bend for...

**Jacque:** Three years.

**Jim:** ...three and a half years.

**Jacque:** Typical tour of duty.

**Denny:** And Holla Bend was another refuge where you had great numbers of waterfowl, made you appreciate all the dirty, dusty farming that you did in the summertime. Fighting Johnsongrass and...

**Jacque:** Oh, that was a lot of Johnsongrass.

**Jim:** And eagles was the first time, as you remember, Denny, that gather in good numbers; 25, 30, 40, 50 eagles would be perched in trees around on the refuge and so it was (unintelligible). We bought our first house in Russellville, got into the real estate market as young marrieds for the first time so it was, it was a; Russellville was a beautiful area right in the foothills of the Ozarks and we thoroughly enjoyed it. Got into whitewater canoeing and we had a grand time there.

**Denny:** Gorgeous location, gorgeous place for the various activities that you could (unintelligible). Then your next promotion opportunities came cleaning up another mess.

**Jacque:** I was going to say, as I remember it, there was a problem in Eufaula where Denny Holland had messed up again. And they moved him on up.

(Laughter)

**Jim:** And, you know, at that time it, you didn't apply for jobs.

**Denny:** You were told.

**Jim:** Yeah. And I remember, I remember very well, Larry Givens calling up and saying, "Jim." Said, "You know you've been doing all right over there." And said, "What do you think about going to Eufaula, Alabama?" "Yes sir, Mr. Givens." That was the typical answer that you give, so.

**Jacque:** So we followed Denny and Kathy again, it was.

**Jim:** Let's see, that was, what was the date; do you remember the year exactly?

**Denny:** I can tell you the year, I don't know the date, it was 196, excuse me 1971; December was when I left and you got there in early '72.

**Jacque:** Right.

**Denny:** '72 sticks in my mind.

**Jacque:** 'Cuz Eddy, Eddy had his tenth birthday there and we hardly knew anybody but we got up a gang of kids and took them on a swimming party out to the club. He was ten so that would have been '62, '72 yeah.

**Jim:** Yeah, yeah we did and...

**Jacque:** I remember we came over there before ya'll left and Kathy and you had us out to your house for dinner and showed us around a little bit, which is a really good thing if you're able to; you know lots of times managers moved on and you didn't see them, you know, in house, so to speak, but we made that house trip before ya'll left and it was, we were able; ya'll were able to give us a little insight on things.

**Jim:** You know I think we were really lucky because Eufaula was one of those refuges where the town and the local leaders *really* wanted the refuge and they had campaigned, gone to Congress and everything else, pulled out all the stops so we were very welcomed into that place. So we felt very comfortable going into...

**Jacque:** And in all seriousness, Denny and Kathy had been there and done a good job in the managers before us had, it was pleasant working conditions because of the people before us.

**Jim:** And we were the third, John Eddy was the first one, Denny the second and then us and we, you know, Eufaula was a very nice refuge and had a good farming program again so my experience in Holla Bend and so forth came in really handy. And good waterfowl populations and...

**Jacque:** Well, if you learned equipment at Dover and you learned farming at, in Arkansas, I think that mainly you learned scrounging in Eufaula.

**Jim or Denny:** PR in (unintelligible).

**Jacque:** Oh sorry.

**Jim or Denny:** Scrounge, those were the two...

[Talking at same time, unintelligible]

**Denny:** Oh yes, scrounging, that's right.

**Jim:** We did have at Fort Benning and at that time, you know, refuges for heavy that sort of thing pretty much lived on military surplus and we had Fort Benning in Georgia and we had Marine supply depot at Albany and then, what was the one down south Fort Stuart?

**Denny:** Fort Rucker.

**Jim:** Rucker, Rucker (unintelligible, speaking at same time) with the air support. We made a trip almost, Gus (name?) was the maintenance guy and he was going to some military base every week, it was a weekly trip and uh. We, we did some, you know, we supplied Eufaula Refuge with equipment very handedly but I remember picking somewhere around 50 or 60 brand new jeeps, the N1, A1 jeeps and shipping those things all over the country.

**Denny:** They were classified as radio sets.

**Jim:** They did.

**Denny:** And the radios were more expensive than the vehicle that was carrying them so.

**Jim:** And that was why they were still brand new.

**Denny:** That's right, and nobody picked up on the fact that there's all these wonderful jeeps out here.

**Jim:** And we, we have, we just; all you do is just take all the radio stuff out of them and we had a pile of radio stuff out there that would.

**Denny:** You also had a bridge out there that I picked up to that old aluminum bridge.

**Jim:** Yeah.

**Denny:** I did the GSA person a real favor.

**Jim:** Yeah, but that, those jeeps, we'd put them on rail car and ship them out west and everywhere for the longest—but it was—military surplus was the way to go at that time so.

**Jacque:** Well, the thing we talked about when people mention it, I always tell them that that refuge was in two time zones, it was in two states and how many counties?

**Jim or Denny:** Four counties and two flyways.

**Jim or Denny:** Two flyways.

**Jacque:** And two flyways, that one refuge, which is on the eastern/central time zone line and it was always confusing when we got there first and then we realized you say fast time or slow time or you know.

**Jim or Denny:** Your time or my time.

**Jim or Denny:** One other complication was three judicial districts at that (unintelligible).

**Jacque:** Well, you had to walk a fine line with all of it.

**Kathy:** And the kids these days coming into the Service don't know, they get all new equipment; they don't know how you all had to scrounge; ya'll never had a piece of new equipment.

**Denny:** We should have some old World War II Army bulldozers up at the NCTC museum just as a showpiece. This is what refuges operated with.

**Jim:** Yep.

**Denny:** Until BLHP in the middle '70's.

**Jacque:** And it was very important to establish personal relationships with those people who divvied up on bases and gave it out; you made a really big effort of keeping in their good graces.

**Denny:** 'Cuz the good stuff would get.

**Jacque:** Yeah, pigeonhole to somebody else, set aside for you if you had the; I know ya'll worked hard on keeping those open.



**Denny:** What was your community; tell us a little about your community involvement at Eufaula, Jacque and Jim.

**Jacque:** I guess we were in everything; it was a small town and we loved it.

**Denny:** Work, for you?

**Jacque:** I—I had, to back up when we were in; I married Jim as he was in graduate school but I hadn't finished, now promised my mama I would graduate so when we were in Paris, Tennessee, I drove 35 miles one way to University of Tennessee, Martin, got my degree. Then we went to Holla Bend, I worked two years as elementary school teacher; when we went to Eufaula, I didn't immediately start to work but then our pastor's wife was head of Head Start program, a Federally-funded Head Start program that they had put what they called then the colored school, you know, (unintelligible) and mostly went to the better building, either the black or the white building. And in Eufaula, it was the white building so the building that had housed formerly black had been turned into other things and one of them was a Head Start program and one of them was a kindergarten. And our, in the Methodist Church, pastors moved just like refuge managers moved so the pastor and his wife were moving and that left the Head Start program with, and she said "You'll just love it, you can." And I did, so I became director of the Head Start program and did that for work, money work. But in the community, we were involved in the church, of course, Jim was in the JC's; you can't live in Eufaula and not be involved in the Pilgrimage Association and all...

**Jim:** And the, I helped put on the Alabama Freshwater Fishing Rodeo, was in charge of that one year and that's a big deal if you (unintelligible). There was thousands of folks come in for that, so very involved in the community, and as I had said earlier, it was kind of expected of you because you were welcomed in the town...

**Denny:** Your predecessor had done that.

**Jim:** ... and the refuge was a vital part of it and...

**Jacque:** We were trying to do good to overcome the obstacles that that couple before us (everyone laughing), no we fit right in just as Denny and Kathy had been real active and everything, maybe different organizations some of them, but the same (unintelligible).

**Jim:** But we loved it at Eufaula and Eufaula Refuge and that, that brings on the sad story I guess in that—Langford, Clayton or is it Crayton? Anyway Langford was ARD and they decided that they were, they needed my services in Atlanta and I didn't want to go.

**Jacque:** It was the bicentennial gift to the nation, 1776, they were going to acquire all these lands.

**Jim:** It was a huge land acquisition they were building up for, part of the B—the LHP Program, you know, and uh. And so I got word that I; they wanted me to come to Atlanta and I said “No thanks. I don't want to come to Atlanta.”

**Denny:** (Unintelligible) you said NO.

**Jim:** About the, about the third time—they came down and they said, “You don't understand, you're being directed to move to Atlanta.” And I said “No thanks.” I was still reasonable naïve. I said, “I'd rather stay down here.” And then I got the little letter in the mail that said that, still got it in fact in there, that says “On such and such a date, termination proceeding will begin against you if you're not in place in Atlanta.” So I was in place in Atlanta.

**Jacque:** As I recall that letter, as I recall that letter, it said “If you're not in Atlanta by...” and I don't remember the date, “...your severance pay will be”, you know, “at this certain rate.” And it gave the amount of our severance pay and told how much he would get if we did not go to Atlanta.

**Denny:** Resisted.

**Jacque:** Yeah. But ever since Jim had joined with the Fish and Wildlife Service, you know, you have those goals and all that, periodically go and do a lot of team building that sort of thing and every time they say, “Well, what are goals, what are your career goals in Fish and Wildlife Service?” And he would always put “I want to be the best refuge manager I can be.” That’s all he aspired to be, never wanted to be into management, administration, (unintelligible), wanted to be at the ground level and at that point he kept saying that “I don’t want.” And I remember that; he kept saying, “Jacque, I just like to be on refuges.”

**Jim:** Well (some talking at same time) we wound up in Atlanta, by the way. And as looking back on it, it was, it was—all things considered, you know, it was probably the best thing that could have happened.

**Denny:** Career wise.

**Jim:** ‘Cuz, you know, I couldn’t have stayed at Eufaula forever and that acquisition program was (unintelligible), I can look back; in fact, I’ve got all of the biological ascertainment reports redid and it’s probably—eight or nine National Wildlife Refuges right now that we, that we did the studies on and they are now National Wildlife Refuges.

**Jacque:** Made recommendations.

**Jim:** So, kind of proud of that, and you’d think, like you made a real contribution and—and as we were talking earlier, Denny, also was part of that, got in on the BLHP planning and first time since I had been employed, we were actually buying new equipment for (unintelligible).

**Jacque:** What is BLHP?

**Denny:** It stands for Bicentennial Land Heritage Program.

**Jacque:** Right.

**Denny:** And it was an initiative that President Ford got passed through Congress as part of his re-election planning and didn't quite work out but nevertheless, the program was funded sort of as an afterthought because it was originally intended for the National Park Service.

**Jacque:** I just remember it was the, we called it the Bicentennial Gift to the Nation.

**Denny:** Yeah.

**Jacque:** I guess that was what one of his speeches had mentioned, so.

**Jim:** And it was, it was an exciting time, it was a time that none of us had ever experienced that had been around. I guess I'd been employed what, almost ten years and...

**Denny:** And today being February the 22 of 2010, this total program was envisioned to be 250 million dollars. WOW, huge bucks.

**Jacque:** Back then it was.

**Jim:** I can remember setting up with—Phil Morgan and myself and John Dobel and Don Adams, I think, and we were kind of a team and there may have been somebody else and there probably was.

**Jacque:** Don Brooks.

**Denny:** Bridges.

**Jim:** When Bridges...

**Denny:** Bob came in later then.

**Jim:** Yeah, Bridges was on the ascertainment work that we did; he was my partner on the ascertainment work that we did but not the BLHP part of it. But I remember, you know, the managers would send in their want list, this is what I need. And you kind of felt like a little god; you'd be sitting up there with all of us say "Well, we'll give them this, this, this and this, you know. We'll give them dozer and a tract line and four dump trucks." And whatever.

**Denny:** Travis was part of that (unintelligible).

**Jim:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jacque:** Travis...

**Jim:** But it was a pretty neat, pretty neat time. But I guess I was stubborn enough that when they moved me into Atlanta, I said "I don't intend to be a part of this Regional Office." So I was looking for a way to get out from the beginning and—but stayed what, almost three years in Atlanta in the Regional Office there. And then—the area office concept was going strong at the time; as you remember, Denny, you were in Jackson, Mississippi. And the job—Red Shelton was the head of the refuge operation at the area office in Salt Lake and moved to Alaska and that opened a job up and I applied for it and off we went to Salt Lake City, which was a big adventure at the time. I remember, I remember I called home and told Jacque. I said "Well, babe, we got the job in Salt Lake." And she said "JIMMMY." I remember the way you did it (laughing) her voice went up and up and up.

**Jacque:** Well, you know, when, as everybody knows, when you move the family's affected and we had a son that was, you know we moved him from Eufaula going into the tenth grade and that's traumatic for a kid and one going into the ninth grade. And here we; they'd settled down and they got in a good group in church and a good, they were doing sports, running track and cross-country in Snellville High School. And here we; Eddy was, when he got the job and was supposed to transfer the first of the year, he was going to graduate in May. And that was his senior year so that was awful. We said we can't do that to him so Jim moved out in January and we stayed until, the family stayed; Tammy and Todd and Ed and I, in Atlanta, Snellville until; and he would, Jim you know, I don't know if he likes to admit it but he was a family man and he really did not like living alone and he didn't know how to cook or anything. And he, after everybody left the refuge office he would call, you know, he had—from the office, you know as part of the deal he would call home every day. And he would and sometimes he would tell me what he had cooked and tell me things about the Mormon culture and this, that and the other. But one time I remember he called and said, "How do you make salmon patties, fried salmon patties?" And so I basically told him, you know, and mentioned that you add a little bit of an egg and a little bit of flour to make it stick together and some onion and just that's it, there's nothing to it. "Oh that's where I went wrong I guess." (Unintelligible), he had tried it, he didn't know what went in there so he decided he would put, he did put some onion and then he said he put some oatmeal but he didn't put an egg or milk or anything. He said "It wouldn't stick together. I just put it in the skillet and it just kind of fell apart." I thought "Oh my word! Go out and eat." "No, I wanted something." You know the food was different.

**Denny:** Yeah.

**Jacque:** And he was wanting some southern food and he was running then, he'd run up (unintelligible) run up around the cemetery and noticed the tombstones we talked about that would be "Father, Mother, Mother, Mother, Mother, Mother." You know from the plural marriage days of the Mormon church but we stayed in Atlanta but then when we got there, loved it; fell in love with skiing where in Eufaula, there's Ladies Day at the

club, there they have Ladies Day skiing, you can go up on Thursdays and have reduced rate skiing and never skied and...

**Denny:** Snow skiing.

**Jacque:** Snow skiing, snow skiing.

**Denny:** As opposed to water skiing.

**Jacque:** Water skiing. And Jimmy had been out there long enough and had tried it on a little bunny hill and then I'll let you get to refuge stuff, but anyway a little bunny hill and he said; Tammy and I were going to go with him, it's just a little bitty ski lodge lift. So we didn't have lessons or anything and we went up and unbeknownst to us, we put the ski poles; if you snow ski you know you know don't, you put your ski poles on your arms is what we did and sat on the lift. Well, we got to the top of the lift and stepped off. Well, as we stepped off, she and I crossed our ski poles; well, I tripped her and she tripped me and we just fell roll, tumble, tumble, tumble. Well, they stopped the ski lift and we; Tammy was 7<sup>th</sup> grade, OH terribly embarrassed. And the little guy came out of the ski hut and he said "Ladies. You don't put your ski poles on your arms until you get off the lift. Hold them in your outside hand." We went "Okay." So embarrassed, but we became very good at skiing and it was a life-long sport that we loved and went back a number of times even after we left there. Eddy went to Utah State and stayed there.

**Jim:** But after the, as I called it, the concrete jungle of Atlanta, and they had moved the office by the way, but the second year in Atlanta, they moved the office from an outlying area that was really neat into the new federal building right downtown and when I say concrete jungle, it was, it was (unintelligible). But anyway, after experiencing that, when I got to Salt Lake and had Colorado, Utah and southern Wyoming as my, basically the refuges in that area, I thought I died and gone to heaven. It was just wonderful and traveling in that country. Had Bear River Refuge in Utah and Seedskaadee in Wyoming and then the...

**Jacque:** The Springs.

**Jim:** ...the Arapaho Fish Springs in Utah; Arapaho and Monte Vista, (unintelligible) Monte Vista in Colorado. It was quite a neat experience. Bear River was a treasure and still is but it was something to get up there and we were doing the—all of the refurbishing those; they got five, big five thousand-acre impoundments at their, right at the head of the river that comes down out of the mountains and empties into the Great Salt Lake and...

(Flipped tape)

**Jim:** ...we were refurbishing all of those things and contour farming them and, and at the same time there was the old biological field station, the—for botulism research station, a huge thing. They were refurbishing that under BLHP to make a new office and a little visitor center type thing. And we worked and worked and worked and got all that work done and got that new building in and they moved into it and the year after I left there, everything flooded. And flooded all the work we did was washed away and the new building was; I don't think they ever went back to it after that and so (someone sneezing) quite, quite a deal. But for, you know, somebody born and raised in the south, that was some really new experiences in that western country.

**Jacque:** It was like we were on vacation for three years.

**Jim:** Yeah, yeah it was. And Bob...

**Denny:** Shields.

**Jim:** ...Bob Shields was the area manager at the time. And Bob Shields moved to Denver as the deputy regional director about, oh about the first of the year and what; that would have been 1982 and around the first of the year and maybe the fall of '81, he moved to Denver and I think they were already rethinking area offices at the time 'cuz



they never did refill so the; Bob Jacobson was the head of (unintelligible) and can't remember who the Fisheries guy was but we would take turns three months at a time or maybe it was just a month at a time; there was a limit that you could serve as a (unintelligible, speaking at same time) as an acting, anyway.

**Denny:** A hundred and twenty days, I think it was.

**Jim:** Yeah. Anyway we would, we would rotate it out and as acting they never did refill behind him and then in '82 they, the summer of '82 they; part of Reagan's, when he was in was doing, gonna cut down big government so they did away with area offices, as you know.

**Jacque:** And we didn't want to move again but we did.

**Jim:** And I remember at the time, of course, there was a lot of area office people that were campaigning for jobs and I remember they offered me Des Lacs Refuge which was nine miles from the Canadian border up in North Dakota and that didn't sound really good to a southern boy and then I could have had a job in Washington or Denver and I was ready to go back to the field by then and did not know quite what I was going to do. And then June Roberts, bless his heart, was the manager at Noxubee and he passed away, had liver disease. And he passed away and I said "Let's do it. I want to go to Noxubee." So it worked out. It kind of, as I had said earlier, we spent some time on Noxubee as a student here and it was kind of a big circle that we wound up back in the summer of 1982 as manager of Noxubee Refuge. And...

**Jacque:** Here we are.

**Jim:** ...there ends the story. And we spent the next 22 years at...

**Denny:** Let's talk about that in just a little bit, we're close to the end of this so let me punch stop button and if I can find the stop button.

[Miscellaneous talking, end of tape]